

Ballard High School Orchestra 2022-2023 Handbook

***Music doesn't lie. If there is something to be
changed in this world, then it can only happen
through music.
– Jimi Hendrix***



BALLARD MUSIC

Daniel Valdez
Director of Orchestras
dmvaldez@seattleschools.org
(206) 252-1034

ORCHESTRA DESCRIPTIONS

Concert Orchestra

A string orchestra comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, or bass. All incoming freshmen begin in this group unless they choose to audition for Symphonic or Chamber Orchestra. This class is also open to beginners. This class will focus on nuts-and-bolts skills review, and will learn about and perform a variety of music for stringed instruments of all styles. Concert Orchestra will perform at our Fall, Winter, and Spring Concerts. Concert Orchestra members will attend the fall retreat with Symphonic and Chamber Orchestra members, and potentially have other travel and field trip opportunities.

Symphonic Orchestra

A string orchestra comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, or bass. This group learns about and performs a wide array of string orchestra literature, and other important musical skills/concepts. The Symphonic Orchestra will perform at our Fall, Winter, and Spring Concerts and combine with members of Chamber orchestra and members of band and choir for a winter collaborative performing experience. Symphonic Orchestra members attend the fall retreat, the orchestra performs at regional events, performs at school concerts and events, and takes out-of-state trips (when allowed by the district).

Chamber Orchestra

An auditioned chamber orchestra comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, or bass. Chamber Orchestra performs a diverse selection of string orchestra literature and practices other advanced-level musical skills. The Chamber Orchestra will perform at our Fall, Winter, and Spring Concerts and combine with members of other orchestras, and the band and choir for a winter collaborative performing experience. There will be additional opportunities for full orchestra performance throughout the year. Over the course of the year, students will form small ensembles (trios, quartets, etc.) for various gig and performance opportunities. Chamber Orchestra attends the fall retreat, participates in regional events, performs at school concerts/events, and takes out-of-state trips (when allowed by the district).

Extracurricular—Fiddle Ensemble

This ensemble is comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, bass, guitar, mandolin, etc. Fiddle ensemble members work to refine their improvisational skills, learn music in an aural tradition, and explore various genres of music including American fiddle music, jazz, rock, pop and more. The Fiddle Ensemble performs at school concerts and special events, is available for private performances throughout the year, and may go on overnight/ out-of-state field trips (when allowed by the district). Currently, Fiddle Ensemble meets on Tuesday evenings from 6:00-7:30 in Orchestra Room.

“Live your truth. Express your love. Share your enthusiasm. Take action towards your dreams. Walk your talk. Dance and sing to your music. Embrace your blessings. Make today worth remembering.” — Steve Maraboli

GRADING SYSTEM AND OBJECTIVES

The depth of coverage of material in this course requires active student engagement and participation. The failure to attend class prevents active student engagement. Because active student engagement is a necessary component of this class, attendance, tardiness, and class participation will be considered as a basis for grading in this course.

Each student is given 5 points for Daily Participation. Doing work for other classes or work not assigned to be done during class, sleeping, social talking, being tardy or leaving class early without an excuse are all circumstances that may result in loss of your daily participation points. Students will receive no participation points for days on which they have unexcused absences.

Student grades will be based on the following:

- **Daily Participation** – Students earn 5 points each day and can lose points for the following reasons:
 - Excessive Socializing or Talking.
 - Our primary goal in orchestra is to make music. It is my goal to ensure that rehearsals are run in a fun but efficient and effective manner at all times. This should be the goal of the musicians as well. It is easy to become distracted in a room full of students. I will always try to keep you on task but it is your job to accept the responsibility for your actions. The two most disruptive elements to a rehearsal is excessive talking and phone usage. Please come to orchestra with your phone silenced and put away, and **BE READY TO PLAY YOUR INSTRUMENT**. That is why we are here.
 - Gum, Candy, Food, or Soda.

- You can endanger your instrument or another person’s instrument if you are consuming food, drinks, or chewing gum in class. Please work to keep our shared spaces clean!
 - Materials not brought to or being used in class.
 - Always have your instrument, folder, and a pencil and mark your music.
 - Poor Posture and Alignment.
 - This inhibits healthy instrument playing.
 - Unauthorized use of cell phones or other electronic devices.
 - If you are texting or otherwise distracted by your phone, you are not on task and are not contributing positively to the group.
 - Disruptive Behavior.
 - Leaving before being dismissed.
 - Rough housing.
 - Disrespectful behavior towards classmates or teachers.
 - Leaving the learning space (for non-emergencies) during class
- **Performance Points** – Students earn up to 100 points for participation in each required concert.
 - Attendance for the entire concert is required. We must all support each other’s portion of the concert.
 - Students may also be required to attend dress rehearsals or extra rehearsals as deemed necessary.
- **Assignments and Assessments** –
 - Several playing tests, utilizing the BHS Orchestras Playing Test Rubric, may be administered throughout the year to test student’s musical comprehension and skills growth.
 - Throughout the year, there will be collaborative and individual assignments focusing on the Artistic Process and other important concepts. These types of activities will be assigned various numbers of points based on how involved the assignment is.

ORCHESTRA LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

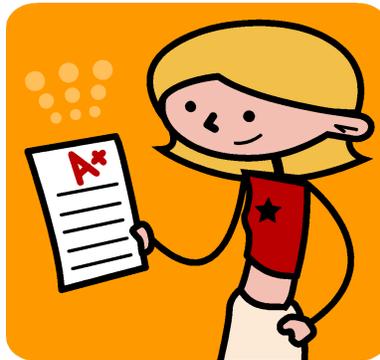
Instrumental Technique:

1. Recognize pitches and rhythmic values when reading music.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of time signatures.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of key signatures.
4. Play major, minor, and chromatic scales.

5. Read treble, alto and bass clef.
6. Perform basic rhythmic patterns using all note values and rests.
7. Demonstrate proper posture for playing.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of bow hold and right-hand technique.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of left hand technique.
10. Perform with musically varied and appropriate tone.

Musicianship, Artistry, Decolonization:

1. Demonstrate understanding of /practice the components of The Artistic Process.
2. Work on developing a personal philosophy of what being a creator of art means to you personally.
3. Understand and practice the work needed to dismantle the systems in our institutionalized form of music education that cause harm to/exclude members of our community, especially students and families of color.
4. Develop an open mind for numerous approaches to music creation, performance, and learning.



REHEARSAL PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Be in your assigned seat with your instrument, stand, folder and a pencil at the start of class.
2. You will be expected to participate fully every day that you are in attendance. I realize that there will be some days you will not feel like it. However, if you are well enough to be in class, you will need to participate to the best of your ability. If you have some type of injury that would prevent you from playing properly, you need to speak with me before class so that I can evaluate the situation and we can come up with a plan for your participation.
3. Please do not chew gum or eat food in this class.
4. Listen and pay attention at all times during rehearsal. Even if only one section is rehearsing, everyone else should be following along in the music. Plan to talk very

- little and play a great deal when you come to rehearsal! Plan to be an active contributor in moments when we are having discussions or planned interactions.
5. Play with “musician’s posture” at all times. Make great alignment a habit, rather than something you save for performances.
 6. Mark your music IN PENCIL during rehearsals.
 7. Willingly try everything you are asked to do by your teacher or other coaches.
 8. Do not write on the white board unless asked to do so.
 9. Do not play the grand piano or drum set.
 10. Keep cell phones put away unless we need them for a specific classroom activity.
 11. Conflicts with the performance schedule and other personal business should ALWAYS be discussed OUTSIDE OF CLASS and on a one-on-one basis with the teacher.
 12. Music performance is an artform that occurs in the moment. If you’re not in class during rehearsals then you miss something that can’t be made up or created on your own. If you need to use the bathroom in an emergency situation, wait for an appropriate interval and then leave quietly and return as fast as you can.
 13. A respectful attitude toward your classmates and teacher must be maintained at all times. There will be challenging times in this class, but there will be many more good times. I want you to enjoy orchestra and a positive atmosphere will make that possible.

*“Always rehearse your performance
because you will perform your rehearsal.”*

POLICY ON PERFORMANCE ABSENCES

As a member of the Ballard High School Orchestras, you are required to be at all dress rehearsals, performances, and assigned music events. Important musical factors such as balance and blend are affected by the absence of even a single performer! You accept the responsibility to be at required concerts when you join a musical group. Your grade will reflect how well you meet this responsibility.

- Look over the calendar carefully NOW. Note the performances which are required as a member or your orchestra.
- Decide which optional activities you might want to be involved in.
- Write appropriate dates on your family’s activity calendar NOW.
- Absences from required concerts will result in loss of points with the exception of:
 - **Illness**
 - **Death in the immediate family**

- **Planned absence** – This means that the director has been notified several weeks (if not months) in advance, and that every attempt has been made to rectify the conflict.
- Absences from required concerts due to the following reasons will not be excused:
 - **I had to work.** Students are given the performance schedule early in the school year so that they can avoid conflicts with work schedules. Employers told far in advance of a specific date will most likely avoid it.
 - **I couldn't find a ride.** There are many other students in the orchestra program that will gladly help you get to and from the concert. In addition, we have a wonderful public transportation system. If you are having trouble finding a way to get here, please speak to the teacher for ideas.
 - **I forgot.** Students are reminded daily for at least one week prior to a concert and are given a performance schedule at the beginning of the year.
- If after speaking with the director it is determined that you **MUST** miss a performance, please discuss with your director what might be done as a “make-up” for the absence (for 80 points).

REQUIRED PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

Students are expected to perform in formal concert attire. The expectation is that all students will wear ankle-length black skirts or dress pants, black socks, black dress shoes, and black tops. For tops, students can choose between either the tuxedo tops that are purchased at a local retailer (see below), the velvet tops provided by the school, or provide their own formal/ full-coverage black top from home. For bottoms, students can choose between the ankle-length skirts or pants provided by the school or provide their own ankle-length formal black bottom option from home. Any personal tops or bottoms provided by the student need to be preapproved **BEFORE THE FIRST PERFORMANCE** by Mr. Valdez at the start of the school year and then worn consistently at concerts throughout the year.

Bottom line: formal/ black, and full-length on the bottom, formal/ black, and full-coverage on top, black dress shoes, black socks.

Students will have fittings for concert attire/uniforms during the first week of school. Please be ready to articulate your needs to the volunteers when you go to get fitted. If you are planning to use a personal top or bottom from home, please plan to bring it in during the first week of school in order to get approval from Mr. Valdez.

Tuxedo

Owned and maintained by the Ballard Performing Arts and is loaned to students for the school year and kept at home.

Tux jacket and pants, bow tie, cummerbund, garment bag and hanger

All people wearing tuxedos will be measured by a professional during the first full week of school, after school. Dates & times TBD. This is mandatory for all people wearing school tuxedos.

Students must provide:

Black socks, black dress shoes (no tennis shoes), tux shirt, cufflinks, and studs.

Tux shirts, cufflinks and studs are available to purchase from Ted Brown Music, 1006 NE 50th St, 206-622-0171. The tux shirts cost \$19.99.

Skirt and Velvet Top Concert Outfit

Owned and maintained by the Ballard Performing Arts and is loaned to students for the school year and kept at home.

Black velvet top, black satin skirt and garment bag and hanger

Student must provide:

Black, low heeled, closed toe dress shoes and black hose or tights (optional).

T-shirt

All orchestra students will have the same t-shirt, which comes included with the annual fee. This shirt is worn on trips and at informal events where formal attire is not required.

Concert attire should be clean and neatly pressed for each performance. Music department attire is to be worn ONLY at music department performing events. A student who loses or damages a uniform component owned by BPA will be charged the fees necessary for replacing it.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Community

Orchestra at BHS is a community. We must operate with wellbeing in the forefront of our minds. Our community is made up of a diverse group of people who are on all ends of the experience continuum. Everyone is to be welcomed for who they are, respected, supported, and honored for their commitment to music and to our community. In our program, we will be actively practicing the work needed to dismantle the systems in our institutionalized form of music education that cause harm to/exclude members of our community. Also, in our program, no one group or person is superior. Students are to work diligently to not perpetuate this behavior.

Financial Assistance

If at any time during the year you experience financial hardship that inhibits paying for a required fee, please call, e-mail, or send a note. You may also talk to me before or after class. WE WILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK!!!

Not Just Eurocentric (Classical) Music

There will be a wide variety of music studied in this class, with an emphasis on lifting up underrepresented voices. Note reading is only one way of conveying music. We will explore other tools for learning and performing music including learning music aurally. Some of our work may require you to sing. Some of our work may be toward creating a virtual product. Some work may require arranging and composition. Some work will be with guest culture bearers. Some work will be outside of the orchestral norm. Please enter into this work with an open mind. Please be a willing community member, do your best, and have fun!

-Life is too short for ordinary experiences. -